A

TREATISE

ON

CHRISTIAN FAITH,

Extracted and translated from the Latin of

HERMANNUS WITSIUS.

By the Rev. Mr. MADAN.

Heb. xi. 6.

Without Faith, it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD.

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CHRISTIAN FAITH,

BRITISH MUSEUM

By the Rev. Mr. MADAN

[Price Sixpence.]

PREFACE.

OF all enquiries, which employ the minds of men, I know not any that can be reckoned *important*, in compariſon of that which was once made by a trembling jaylor at Philippi, viz. *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And I ſuppoſe there can hardly be found one thinking Man, let his ſentiments in other reſpects be what they may, but will join with me in ſaying, that the *ſalvation of the ſoul*, is the moſt awful of *all* concerns. This being the caſe, I need not ſtudy an apology for laying the following extract before the public, unleſs it be

be for the homely dreſs I have put upon my author : it muſt be remembered that I have changed his language in order to bring the unlearned to an acquaintance with him, and the better to carry on this deſign, have made him ſpeak as plain as I poſſibly could.

As for the ſubject matter of this little treatiſe, I think I may venture to recommend it, becauſe the book from whence it was taken has met with the approbation of many learned and excellent divines, who mention the name of Witſius with peculiar and diſtinguiſhed reverence; but even this ought to have but little weight with the reader, did not our author's ſentiments exactly comport with the divine mind and will, as revealed in the word of God, the only infallible ſtandard of all ſaving truth.

It is clear from the anſwer Paul gave the trembling *queriſt* above-mentioned, that the only mean of ſalvation is *faith*: ſurely then it muſt be an acceptable thing, at leaſt to every ſerious mind, to meet with a plain and truly ſcriptural account of the *only way of deliverance* for a ſinful ſoul; eſpecially as we live in a time, when it is much miſunderſtood, or wholly unknown, when *preſumption* on the one hand, and *deſpair* on the other, are ſpreading their nets for the feet of the ignorant and unwary: but this ever was, and will be the caſe, whenever God is pleaſed to revive his work: the grand deſire of our *ghoſtly enemy* is to keep us in ſin and ignorance, therefore when truth puts forth its lovely face, and ſhines with its native heavenly luſtre, as *ſatan* cannot eclipſe its brightneſs by outward and direct oppoſition, he will endeavour to ſet up falſe lights, in order to miſlead the

unwary

unwary traveller; yea, rather than fail, *will transform himself into an angel of light*, 2 Cor. xi. 14.

Hence is is that many are deceived in their notions of *faith*, are led to think it ſomething which it is not; the *legaliſt* is for mixing the impure leaven of his own imperfect works, with the bread of God, and muſt have ſomething in himſelf to recommend him to the favour of God, in order to merit, in a meaſure at leaſt, the forgiveneſs of his ſins.—The *Antinomians*, who are moſt vile and wicked perverters of the *right ways of the Lord*, are reſting in ſomething they call *faith*, which hath nothing of *ſalvation*, but the foreſt *condemnation* in it, to which, ſaith the apoſtle, *they were of old ordained*, Jude 4. Add to theſe the number of *well-meaning ſerious* people, who by taking the marks of *faith* too *high*, are labouring under

under the moſt fearful apprehenſions of their ſtate before God, and by thinking the *eſſence of faith* conſiſteth in frames and feelings, are blind to that happineſs, which, the real work of God within them, would otherwiſe put them in poſſeſſion of.

Let all ſuch read and mark the plain ſimple account of *faith* which (I doubt not in exact conformity to the ſcriptures) is exhibited to view in this book, and the more they compare their own experience with it, the more clearly will they be enabled to diſcern the true ſtate of their ſouls. But the cleareſt light is nothing to the blind; therefore let every reader go to the throne of Grace, for the *ſeeing eye*, and the *underſtanding heart*, and then they may expect a bleſſing from what they read.

That

That bleſſings ſuitable to the ſeveral wants of every reader, may accompany their peruſal of this ſmall, but ſincere endeavour, after the Redeemer's glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures, is the earneſt prayer of,

Theirs, for Chriſt's ſake,

Jan. 22.
1761.

M. MADAN.

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HERMANNUS WITSIUS.

Of FAITH.

SECTION I.

A True faith in God through Jeſus Chriſt is the principal act of that ſpiritual life, which is begun in the elect by regeneration, as well as the fountain head, from whence, all thoſe *living* works which follow after regeneration, proceed: the nature of this faith we are now about to explain. It is not any one ſingle habit or act of the ſoul, nor ought it to be reſtrained to one faculty thereof only; but it is ſomething made up of various acts, which, though not in a confuſed manner, may interfere one with the other, and in a kind of delightful fellowſhip and union, promote and help each other, and this conſtantly. It imports a change of the whole man, is the ſpring of the whole ſpiritual life; and laſtly, it denotes a holy diligence and energy of the whole ſoul towards God in Chriſt, ſo that its full compaſs can ſcarcely be comprehended in a diſtinct manner under any one ſingle idea.

SECT. II.

Let not any one wonder, that we include ſo many things under the name of one chriſtian virtue; for as a perſon ſpeaking of *life*, deſigns to expreſs by that word, ſomething, that diffuſing itſelf throughout the whole ſoul, and all its faculties, is communicated alſo to the body, and extends itſelf to all the actions of a living perſon; ſo, when we ſpeak of faith, which is the fruitful fountain of the whole ſpiritual life, we would have that underſtood to be ſignified, which pervades all the faculties, and is exactly calculated to unite them with Chriſt, and thus enliven, ſanctify and make them bleſſed.

SECT. III.

We muſt obſerve by the way, that amongſt thoſe acts which we are about to deſcribe, there is one in particular, in which we think the formal reaſon and eſſence of faith, ſo far as it unites us with Chriſt and juſtifies us, conſiſts. And this is to be carefully obſerved in the buſineſs of juſtification, leſt any one ſhould look upon thoſe acts of charity

which

which in different ways are connected with the practice of faith, as the cauſes of juſtification.

SECT. IV.

Moreover we muſt premiſe, that thoſe things which we are going to explain with greater accuracy, are connected with each other by diverſe ways in the practice and exerciſe of faith. While the whole ſoul is intent on this work of God, very many actions may tend towards God in Chriſt, which obſerve no certain method, and which the faithful ſoul hath neither leiſure nor inclination to digeſt into their proper rank and order, nor would it always be poſſible ſo to do. But it is expedient for us to attend to the natural and ordinary proceſs of faith, that we may the better underſtand the whole manner thereof.

SECT. V.

Firſt, That which faith comprehends, or at leaſt ſuppoſes, is a *knowledge* of the things which are to be believed. This, in contradiction to the abſurdity of the Papiſts, is very plain, I. from the ſcriptures; which ſo ſpeak of faith, as manifeſtly to give us to underſtand, that knowledge is included in the very idea, as well as the practice

tice of faith, Iſa. liii. 11. John xvii. 3. compared with Hab. ii. 4. John vi. 69. 2 Tim. i. 3. II. From the very nature of faith, which, as it ſpeaks of an aſſent given to a truth revealed by God, and that without any doubting, neceſſarily preſuppoſes the knowledge of theſe two things, 1. That God has revealed ſomething. 2. What that ſomething is, which faith aſſents to as divinely revealed. For to ſay that a perſon aſſents to any truth, which he is ignorant of, and concerning which, he knows not whether there be any teſtimony extant which is worthy of credit, is abſurd. III. The preſuppoſition of this knowledge is plain from the manner in which faith is produced in the ſoul; that is to ſay, it is done *externally* by the preaching and hearing of the goſpel, Rom. x. 17. which reveals the thing to be believed, with demonſtration of the truth to the conſcience, 2 Cor. iv. 2. and it is done *internally*; and both theſe by the inſtitution and appointment of God the Father, John vi. 45. If therefore faith is generated in the heart by an *external*, as well as an *internal* inſtitution, it neceſſarily muſt conſiſt in knowledge; for knowledge is the moſt proper and immediate effect of ſuch inſtitution.

IV.

IV. The preſuppoſition of this knowledge is plain, from the conſequences annexed to it, which are, *confeſſion* and *acknowledgment*, Rom. x. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 15. but theſe things cannot be, where there is no knowledge. Hilary ſaith well, that none can ſpeak what he does not know.

SECT. VI.

But indeed it muſt be confeſſed, that in this dark ſtate of our minds, there are many things of which even the moſt illuminated are ignorant; and many things, eſpecially by young beginners and babes in Chriſt, to be implicitly believed, ſo far as they admit in general the ſcripture to be the infallible ſtandard of all things which are to be believed (in which are contained many things they underſtand not) and ſo far as they embrace the chief doctrines and opinions of chriſtianity, in which many other truths are centred, which, by evident conſequence, are drawn from thence, and which they believe, on conſidering the foundation on which they ſtand; as St. John writes to the faithful, that *they knew all things*, 1 John ii. 20. becauſe through the teaching

of the Spirit they had learnt that foundation of foundations, to which all ſaving truths are reduced, and from which they are deduced. But to proceed. It might ſo happen, that a perſon to whom has been given but a ſcanty portion of knowledge, may nevertheleſs be firm in faith, even to martyrdom, but then it does not follow, that faith is better deſcribed by ignorance, than by knowledge: or that thoſe do well, who cheriſh ignorance amongſt the people, as the mother of faith and devotion, contrary to Col. iii. 16. for by no means can any one believe what he is wholly ignorant of, Rom. x. 14. All ſhould ſtrive to have their faith as little implicit, and as much diſtinct as poſſible, as becometh thoſe *who are filled with all knowledge*, Rom. xv. 14. for the more diſtinctly a perſon ſees, by the light of the Spirit, a truth revealed by God, and the rays of divinity that ſhine therein, the more firmly will he believe it. The martyrs, who as to other things were rude and unlearned, ſaw, moſt diſtinctly and clearly, that thoſe truths, for which they made no ſcruple to die, were moſt certain and divine, tho' perhaps they could not have diſputed very ably for them in the ſchools.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Moreover thoſe things which are neceſſary to be known, by one who would believe aright, are, in general, the divinity of the ſcriptures, into which faith muſt be ultimately reſolved; but more eſpecially thoſe things which concern the obtaining ſalvation by Chriſt, which may ſummarily be reduced to theſe three heads. I. That you ſhould know, that by ſin you are alienated from the life of God, and *have come ſhort of the glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. and that it is not in your own power, or in that of an angel from heaven, or any creature in the world, or all the creatures together, to draw you out of this abyſs of miſery, and make you happy. II. That you ſhould know Chriſt the Lord, *full of grace and truth*, John i. 14, who is that *only name given under heaven whereby we can be ſaved*, Acts iv. 12. and in the knowledge of whom ſtandeth our *eternal life*, John xvii. 3. III. That you ſhould know it to be neceſſary, if you would obtain ſalvation in Chriſt, to be united to Him by the Spirit and by faith, and to give yourſelf up to Him, not only to be juſti-

fied,

fied, but to be ſanctified, and to be governed by his will and pleaſure, *proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* Rom. xii. 2.

SECT. VIII.

To this *knowledge* muſt be joined an *aſſent*, which is the ſecond act of faith, by which a perſon receives and acknowledges as truths, the things he knows, receiving the *teſtimony of God*, and thus *ſetting to his ſeal that God is true*, John iii. 33. This aſſent is moſt eſpecially founded upon the infallible veracity of God, who beareth teſtimony of himſelf and of his Son, 1 John v. 9, 10. on which teſtimony revealed in the ſcriptures, and ſhedding forth all around the rays of its divinity, the faithful ſoul relies with no leſs ſafety, than if it had actually been preſent and an immediate party in thoſe things that are revealed. For when the ſoul enlightened by the Spirit of God, perceives thoſe divine truths, and ſeeth in them a certain *divine excellency*, and a moſt wiſe and indiſſoluble connection of the whole, it cannot but aſſent to a truth which forces itſelf upon it with ſo many arguments, and as ſecurely

curely admits, what it thus knows, for certainty, as if it had ſeen it with its own eyes, or handled it with its hands, or had been taken up into the third heaven, and heard it immediately from God. Let the luſt of the fleſh murmur, or let vain ſophiſts argue what they may, though perhaps the ſoul may not be able to anſwer or ſolve all objections, it ſtill perſiſts in the acknowledgment of this truth, which it ſees too clearly, and has heard too certainly, as it were, from the mouth of God, ever to ſuffer itſelf to be drawn away from it by any ſophiſtry. I have not, ſaith the believing ſoul, followed *cunningly deviſed fables* in believing *the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, but, in the ſpirit, have *I beheld his Majeſty, and heard*, as it were, *his voice from heaven*, 2 Pet. i. 16, 18. So that faith is accompanied with what is called *ſubſtance and evidence*, Heb. xi. 1. *full perſuaſion* or *plerophory*, Rom. iv. 21. Of the ſignification of which words, it may not be unuſeful to conſider a little.

SECT

SECT. IX.

The apoſtle ſpeaketh of πληροφορία *full perſuaſion* or *aſſurance* as it is rendered, more than once. He ſpeaketh of the *plerophory of underſtanding*, Col. ii. 2. *The plerophory of hope*, Heb. vi. 11. And *the plerophory of faith*, Heb. x. 22. This word *plerophory*, according to its etymology, denotes any thing that is *ſtrongly borne or carried forward*; a Metaphor, as it ſhould ſeem, taken from ſhips, when their ſails are filled with a proſperous gale: ſo that it here ſignifies the vehement inclination of a ſoul, carried or rather driven forward by the Holy Spirit, towards an aſſent to a truth it is made ſenſible of: that moſt excellent maſter of the Greek tongue Heſychius, explains it by the word *firmneſs*, and in that ſenſe the *plerophory of faith* is nothing elſe than *a firmneſs in the faith of Chriſt*, and πεπληροφορημενα πραγματα are ſuch things as are *moſt ſurely believed*, Luke i. 1. Thus firm therefore ought our aſſent to the divine verity to be.

SECT. X.

The word Ὑποστασις Hypoſtaſis (ſubſtance) is a moſt emphatical word, which the apoſtle uſes when he is ſpeaking of faith, Heb. xi. 1. Nor have the Latins any word that can fully expreſs all its force and ſignificancy. I. Ὑποστασις, denotes *exiſtentia*, the *exiſtence*, or as ſome of the antients have ſaid, *extantia*, the *ſtanding up or appearing* of any thing, in which ſenſe the philoſophers uſe it to expreſs a thing that *really is*, in contradiction to what is the *fiction only of our own minds*: and indeed faith ſo orders it, that the thing hoped for, though not actually extant, is yet extant in the mind of the believer, who aſſents as firmly to the promiſes of God, as if he now had the thing promiſed preſent with him. Chryſoſtom had this in his mind when he ſaid, "The general reſurrection of the dead does not as yet exiſt in itſelf, but Hope (we will ſay *faith*) ſets it before us, and makes it extant or apparent in our minds." A Greek ſcholiaſt, cited by Beza, has expreſſed the ſame thing very happily. "Becauſe things which are placed in expectation only, are void of

of being, as things not yet extant; Faith is a kind of ſubſtance, or eſſence of them, becauſe it makes them in ſome meaſure extant to us, and preſent with us, for that it believes them to be." II. Ὑποστασις, alſo ſignifies a *baſe* or *foundation*, in which ſenſe Diodorus Siculus, cited by Gomarus, ſaid ὑποστασιν τῳ ταφῳ, *the foundation of the ſepulchre*; and to that the interpretation of Calvin looks, *faith*, ſays he, *is the ſame as Hypoſtaſis, that is, a prop or poſſeſſion on which we fix our feet.* III. It ſignifies *ſtedfaſtneſs* and *courage*, by no means yielding to any hoſtile force. In this ſenſe it is uſed by Plutarch and Polybius. And indeed there is ſomething in faith, which will intrepidly ſuſtain all the aſſaults of temptation; nor will it ſuffer itſelf to be moved from an aſſent to a truth it has once known. Now if we join all theſe together, we may ſay, that faith is ſo firm an aſſent to divine truth, that it ſets before us future things as if preſent, and that it is a prop to the ſoul on which it fixes its foot, and yields to no aſſault.

SECT

SECT. XI.

Nor ſhould it be paſſed by unnoticed, that the apoſtle calls faith ἔλεγχος ὐ βλεπομενων *the evidence of things not ſeen.* The word ἔλεγχος denotes theſe two things. I. *Certain demonſtration.* According to Ariſtotle it is *that ſort of reaſoning, which cannot be otherwiſe, but muſt neceſſarily be as we ſay.* II. It denotes, *a conviction of the mind* by ſuch a demonſtration of the truth. In this ſenſe it is uſed by Ariſtophanes. There is therefore in faith, if it be ἔλεγχος (an elenchus) a certain *conviction* of the mind, by reaſon of clear and infallible demonſtration of Truth. But this demonſtration reſts upon the teſtimony of God who cannot deceive; from whence faith thus argues; Whatever God, who is truth itſelf, reveals, cannot but be moſt true and worthy of all acceptation, although I cannot diſcover it with my eyes, or fully comprehend it in my mind.

SECT. XII.

All theſe things tend to this, namely, to teach us, that the *aſſent* there is in faith has the greateſt certainty, which cannot be outdone by the certainty of any mathematical demonſtration; wherefore they ſpeak very incautiouſly, who contend that the mind may be deceived by a falſhood under the notion of faith, ſince the proper object of faith is the teſtimony of God, which is neceſſarily true, and more certain than any demonſtration. Nor can any places of ſcripture be brought, in which any thing is propoſed to a man's belief, which is not true.

SECT. XIII.

But here another ſcruple is to be removed. If faith is ſuch a certain and firm aſſent, are they deſtitute of true faith, who are ſometimes fluctuating and doubting even about fundamental truths? Anſwer, I. We are deſcribing faith as conſidered in idea, as that chriſtian virtue, to the perfection of which we all ought to tend, not as it ſubſiſts in any particular ſubject. II. It may ſometimes happen

pen, even amongſt the moſt eminent believers, eſpecially when expoſed to ſome vehement temptation, that there may be doubts and ſtaggerings, and even contrary inclinations, as the waverings of Aſaph, Jeremy, and others, about the providence of God, do prove; theſe are certain defects in faith, which ariſe from the infirmity of the fleſh. III. faith immediatly wreſtles with thoſe temptations, it doth not aſſent to thoſe ſuggeſtions of the devil, or to the evil deſires of the fleſh; nor doth it ever reſt until it hath entered into the ſanctuary of the Lord, and, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, is confirmed in the contemplation and acknowledgment of the truths, about which it was ſtaggering. There at length, and no where elſe, doth it find reſt for the ſoles of its feet. See Pſ. lxxiii.

SECT. XIV.

What follows *aſſent* to the truth, thus known, and acknowledged, is *love*, and this is the third act of faith, of which the apoſtle, 2 Theſ. ii. 10. for ſince there is a clear manifeſtation of the glory of God in ſaving truths, not only ſo far as he is true in his teſtimony, but

but ſo far alſo as the wiſdom, the holineſs, the juſtice, the power, and other perfections of God, ſhine forth in them, it cannot be, but that the faithful ſoul, diſcerning in thoſe truths theſe amiable perfections of the Deity, ſhould burn with the love of them, ſhould exult in them, and glorify God. Hence the believer is ſaid *to give glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. and to *love his glory*, John xii. 43. nor can it be but the believer ſhould eſpecially delight in the fundamental truth which concerns Chriſt; he loves it as an ineſtimable treaſure, and as a pearl of great price. This is *precious*, yea *moſt precious* to believers, 1 Pet. ii. 7. It is true that love, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is diſtinguiſhed from faith; but nevertheleſs the acts of each are ſo intervoven with one another, that we can never explain nor exerciſe faith without ſome acts of love interfering. This is an obſervation of ſome of the greateſt divines before me, each of which cites that ſaying of St. Auſtin — *What is it to believe in God? by believing to love.* If any have a mind, according to the gloſs of the ſchools, to call this love *a commanded act of faith*, they are welcome to do ſo: only let that be granted, that it cannot be but that the faithful ſoul,

while

while it exerciſes faith, muſt ſincerely love the truths it knows, and acknowledges, as they are in Chriſt, rejoicing that they are true, and delighting itſelf in that truth: far otherwiſe is it with devils and wicked men, who would not have thoſe things true, which they know to be true.

SECT. XV.

Hence ariſes a fourth act of faith, *a hunger and thirſt after Chriſt*; for the faithful ſoul knowing, acknowledging and loving the ſalutary truths of God, cannot but wiſh, that all thoſe things which are true in Chriſt, may be true alſo in regard to itſelf, and that it, according to, and by thoſe truths, may be ſanctified, and made bleſſed; and it cannot but ſeriouſly deſire, that it, being alienated from the life of God upon account of ſin, may be again ſealed unto the glory of God by free juſtification, and in that by ſanctification: this is that *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs* ſpoken of, Mat. v. 6. and pray by what means can it come to paſs, that he, who believes and perceives in himſelf, that he is a moſt miſerable creature, who is moſt firmly perſuaded that he cannot be delivered out

of his miſery by any creature in heaven or on earth, who ſees at the ſame time the fullneſs of that ſalvation that is in Chriſt, who is certain that he cannot attain unto ſalvation, until he be united with Chriſt, who loves that truth from his very ſoul, which treats of the fulneſs of ſalvation that there is in Chriſt only, and in communion with him—I ſay how can it come to paſs, but that ſuch a one muſt ſeriouſly and ardently deſire to have Chriſt, dwelling in him, muſt ſeek it and ſet about it, and that with ſuch a deſire as cannot be ſatisfied, but in the poſſeſſion of the thing deſired; juſt as hunger and thirſt are not appeaſed, but by meat and drink.

SECT. XVI.

What follows this hunger and thirſt, is the *receiving* the Lord Chriſt for juſtification, for ſanctification, and thus for complete ſalvation: and this is the *fifth*, and indeed the formal and chief act of faith, which is thus—the heavenly Father freely offers the Son, Chriſt the Lord freely offers Himſelf, with all his benefits, and fulneſs of ſalvation which reſides in Him, to the ſick and weary ſoul, ſaying, Iſ. lxv. 1. *Behold me! behold me!* and the ſoul now

now conſcious of its own miſery, conſidering the fulneſs of the ſalvation that is in Chriſt, with joy and hope, and eagerly deſiring communion with Him, cannot help apprehending and receiving ſo great a good offered to it; and thus by accepting it, makes it its own: by this act Chriſt is made the peculiar property of the believing ſoul; ſo that whatever is Chriſt's, and offered together with Chriſt, the believer claims to himſelf: and firſt, of all the *righteouſneſs* of Chriſt, which is the foundation of ſalvation, and thus by apprehending Chriſt, is united to Him. The believer being thus united to Chriſt, is deemed and looked upon to have done and ſuffered, whatever things Chriſt, ſo far as He was a *ſurety*, *did* and *ſuffered* in his ſtead. Thus it is eaſily to be underſtood in what manner we are juſtified by faith in Chriſt.

SECT. XVII.

The ſcriptures more than once repreſent this act of faith in expreſs words. A remarkable paſſage is that of John i. 12. *As many as* RECEIVED *him*, which is equivalent to *thoſe who* BELIEVE *on his name*: and Col. ii. 6.

6. As ye have therefore RECEIVED *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, &c. to which may be added what the Lord ſo emphatically ſays, Iſ. xxvii. 5. *Let him* TAKE HOLD *of my ſtrength*, meaning taking ſuch hold as will not be let go, which is the meaning of the original, as thoſe who underſtand it will find by reading Prov. iv. 13. where the word here uſed in Iſaiah to ſignify *taking hold*, is oppoſed to another which ſignifies to *let go*.

SECT. XVIII.

But becauſe the ſoul thus apprehending Chriſt for ſalvation, *reclines* and *leans*, or *reſts* upon Him; therefore this act of faith is frequently explained by this metaphor, as Pſ. lxxi. 6. *By Thee have I been* HOLDEN UP. Iſ. xlviii. 2. *They* STAY THEMSELVES *upon the God of Iſrael*, meaning thoſe who feigned to be true believers. So Iſ. l. 10. *Let him* STAY UPON *his God*. Add to theſe, Iſ. x. 20. 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 8. If you are minded to diſtinguiſh ſubtilly this act of the faithful ſoul thus *reclining* and *leaning* upon Chriſt from the act of *receiving* Chriſt, and place it after,

after, I ſhan't oppoſe it; we will therefore call this a *ſixth* act of faith.

SECT. XIX.

Moreover, When the faithful ſoul thus receives Chriſt and reſts upon Him, it doth not conſider Chriſt as its *Saviour* only, but as its *Lord*. For it receiveth a whole Chriſt, and receiveth Him juſt as he is: and He is not leſs a *Lord* than a *Saviour*. Indeed he cannot be a *Saviour*, unleſs He be alſo *Lord*. In that doth our ſalvation conſiſt, not that we are our *own*, or any *creature's*, but Chriſt the *Lord's*. Faith therefore *receiveth Chriſt the Lord*, Coloſſ. ii. 6. Nor doth Chriſt any otherwiſe offer himſelf as a ſpouſe to the ſoul, than under this condition, that ſhe ſhall acknowledge Him for her *Lord*, Pſ. xlv. 11. And when the ſoul caſts herſelf upon Chriſt, ſhe renounceth her own will, and giveth herſelf up to the will of Jeſus, to be ordered by Him, as He ſhall pleaſe. Hence there is in faith an humble giving and delivering up of *ſelf*, by which the believer, as much as in him lies, as an act he is in duty bound to, makes

a return of *himſelf* to Chriſt, who was ſo freely given to him. *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved* is mine, Cant. vi. 3. *They gave their own ſelves to the Lord,* 2 Cor. viii. 5. Something like the form in which Amaſai gave himſelf, with his companions, to David. 1 Chro. xii. 18. *Thine are we, David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe.* And this giving up ourſelves to Chriſt, which we ſet down as the *ſeventh* act of faith, is the continual ſpring and fountain of all true obedience, which is therefore called *the obedience of faith,* Rom. i. 5.

SECT. XX.

After the believing ſoul hath thus *received* Chriſt, and thus *given itſelf up* to Him, it may and ought to conclude from thence, that Chriſt and all his ſaving benefits are its own, and that it ſhall certainly be bleſſed here and hereafter by him; according to the following infallible argument of faith.—Chriſt offers himſelf as a complete Saviour to all the weary, hungry, and thirſty, that receiving him, are ready to deliver up themſelves to him: but I am

am weary, hungry, thirſty; I receive Him, and am ready to deliver up myſelf to Him: therefore Chriſt hath offered himſelf to *me*, He is now *mine*, *and I am his*; nor ſhall any thing ſeparate me from his love. This is the *eighth* act of faith, and this is what is called a *reflex* act, ſpringing from the conſcience, Gal. ii. 20. 2 Tim. i. 12. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

SECT. XXI.

Hence, laſtly, is derived into the ſoul, which is conſcious of its union with Chriſt by faith, a *truſt*, a *tranquillity*, a *joy*, a *peace*, and a bold *defiance* of all the enemies, and of all the dangers that may aſſail it, a *glorying* in the Lord, a *glorying* in adverſity, while the ſoul ſweetly *leaneth on her Beloved*, Cant. viii. 5. caſting herſelf upon him, certain of the mutual union and communion, and mutual love there is between them; while ſhe ſings, *I am my Beloved's and his deſire is towards me*, Cant. vii. 10. She piouſly exults and delights in her Lord, and rejoiceth in his love, *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. v. 2.

SECT.

SECT. XXII.

Having thus explained theſe things at large, let us now bring them together, and behold them, as it were, in one view. Faith includes the *knowledge* of the myſtery of Chriſt and of God in the light of grace, the truth of which myſtery the faithful ſoul acknowledges, with a full *aſſent* of the mind, upon the authority of God who teſtifieth it; and not only ſo, but the believer *loves* that ſame truth, exults in it, and glorifies God: *deſiring* alſo moſt earneſtly, *communion* with Chriſt, that thoſe things which are true in Chriſt, may be true as to himſelf alſo unto ſalvation; wherefore when, by the word and ſpirit, Chriſt is offered unto him, he *receiveth* Him with the utmoſt willingneſs of mind, he *reſts* upon Him, *leans* upon Him, to Him doth he deliver up himſelf; which being done, he glories that Chriſt is now his own, and moſt ſweetly *delights* himſelf in Him, repoſing himſelf under the *tree of life*, and ſatiating himſelf with its *fruits*. This is the *faith of God's elect*, Tit. i. 1. that ineſtimable gift, the bond of our union with Chriſt, the ladder of

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Paradiſe, the key of the ark of the covenant, by which its treaſures are unlocked, the perpetual fountain of a life, holy, tranquil, and bleſſed.

SECT. XXIII.

If any one imagines that he ſpeaks with greater exactneſs, when he ſo diſtinguiſhes theſe acts of faith, as that ſome of them precede, or go before faith, ſtrictly ſo called; as for inſtance, the knowledge of revealed truth, to which ſome excellent divines add a pious affection of the will towards God: if he thinks others of the things mentioned are of the form and eſſence of faith, as the aſſent, the hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, the receiving Chriſt as a Saviour and Lord, and the ſoul's flying unto Him for refuge: if he thinks others of the acts of faith accidental, which are only agreeable with a firm and ſtrong faith; as for inſtance, that certainty, that Chriſt is now *mine*, and that ſweet reliance upon Him as *mine*, join'd with that rejoicing and glorying in Him; I ſee no reaſon why ſuch a one ſhould not enjoy his own exact method, it is not at all diſpleaſing to me. I only intend to ſhew

that all thoſe things concur in the full and complete practice and exerciſe of faith.

SECT. XXIV.

From what has been ſaid, it is evident, that, between the faith we have been hitherto deſcribing, and what is uſually called an *hiſtorical* or *temporary* faith, there is an almoſt immenſe diſtance. But I doubt whether what they call by thoſe names, are called ſo properly. They call that an *hiſtorical* faith which is *a naked aſſent given to thoſe things which are contained in God's word, and this by reaſon of the authority of God who aſſerts them, but without any pious motion of the will.* However, ſince that aſſent may not only be given to the hiſtories contained in the ſacred volume, but alſo may extend itſelf to the precepts, doctrines, promiſes and threatenings therein contained; the title of *hiſtorical* ſeems to be too narrow to comprehend it: unleſs it may perhaps be ſo called, in reſpect to the *manner* in which it is exerciſed about thoſe things which are the objects of it. For as one who in reading hiſtories of things, which don't concern him, barely contemplates them, and is not inwardly moved

or affected by them; ſo thoſe who have that ſort of faith, do only in an idle, careleſs manner, ſpeculate concerning what they are taught in the word of God, but do not carry them into practice; though, by the way, this is not univerſally true, that *hiſtories* of the greateſt conſequence, and which concern another world, are read without any affection, commotion, and application; therefore it would be better to call this a *theoretic* faith, or a faith of *bare aſſent*.

SECT. XXV.

Our Lord, Mat. xiii. 21. calls that a *temporary* faith, which, beſides a general aſſent, rejoices in the truth known and acknowledged, profeſſes it, and ſtirs up many emotions in the heart, and many actions in the life of the perſon who has it, which exhibit an appearance of real piety, but this *only for a ſeaſon*, while all things under the goſpel are in a proſperous way; but when the ſtorms of perſecution gather, it fails. This ſort of faith is wiſely called by our Lord, πρόσκαιρος, i. e. *that dureth for a while*. But as it poſſibly may happen, and happens frequently, that, while the affairs of a church

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are proſperous, men, in ſuch a profeſſion of faith, and imaginary joy, and in ſuch a particular courſe of life, as they deem ſufficient for the purpoſe of piety, perſevere to the end of their lives; I ſay, as this may be the caſe, the name of *temporary* is not ſo proper for this kind of faith, which our Lord gave only to the faith of *apoſtates*, whereas this faith is not *ſaving* indeed, but it is *conſtant*. Perhaps therefore it might be better called *preſumptuous* faith.

SECT. XXVI.

But it is needfull, for our conſolation, that we ſhould know clearly, by what means this faith may be diſtinguiſhed from that which is *true*, *living*, and *ſaving*. And, firſt, In the *acknowledgment of the truths revealed* there is not a ſmall difference, to which truths indeed this preſumptuous faith aſſents as truths, but as it is deſtitute of the light of the ſpirit, it does not ſee them in their proper form, and as they are true in Chriſt; it does not conſider the perfections of God, which are reſplendent in them; it doth not rightly eſtimate their value; when firſt it be-

begins to know them, it is indeed taken with the rarity and novelty of ſuch things, but doth not light up into an ardent love towards them, nor doth it labour altogether that they ſhould not only be *impreſſed* upon the ſoul, but *expreſſed* in the life and converſation; and as often as other things preſent themſelves to the mind, which flatter with the appearance of pleaſure or profit, it eaſily ſuffers the ideas of thoſe truths, which are enemies to its convenience, to be obliterated, and is very near wiſhing they were not truths, which, even againſt its will, it is forced to account as ſuch. But in the caſe of true faith, theſe things are directly contrary, as we have already ſhewed.

SECT. XXVII.

Secondly, There is a vaſt difference *in the application of the promiſes.* For preſumptuous faith doth not proceed in a true or right method. It raſhly imagines that the ſalvation promiſed in the goſpel belongs to it, but this is either upon no foundation, or upon a falſe one: For whenever ſuch people, without any examination and ſcrutiny of their own hearts, (which they fly from as from ſomething that

is too troubleſome, and inconvenient to their affairs) fooliſhly flattering themſelves, arrogate proudly the grace of our Lord to themſelves, they ſecurely ſlumber in this vain dream; neither do they enquire, nor are they willing to enquire, what is the foundation of this their imagination. Sometimes they lay for a foundation of their confidence, that prepoſterous conception, the *univerſal uncovenanted mercy* of God, and a ſort of eaſy way to heaven, which the goſpel-covenant hath never pointed out: or an opinion of the ſufficiency of their *own holineſs*, when at the ſame time they are very little leſs wicked than the moſt profligate: or their *outward communion* with ſome church, and form of religious worſhip: or the ſecurity of their own *ſleeping conſcience*, and the pleaſant fancies of their *own dreams*, which they think to be the peace of God, and the conſolation of the Holy Spirit. With this, and the like vanities, they deceive themſelves, as if ſuch were ſufficient marks of grace. But true believers, from a deep ſenſe of their miſery, panting eagerly after the grace of the Lord Jeſus, and apprehending it with trembling and humility, dare not to boaſt themſelves, as though it were now be-

become their own; unleſs after a diligent examination of themſelves, they find the certain and infallible marks of grace within them. When they are about to apprehend the grace of Chriſt, they draw near with profound humility, a ſacred kind of horror, and a ſincere denial of themſelves; and when they have apprehended it, they boaſt not of it, unleſs after a moſt exact ſcrutiny, firſt of the marks and ſtandard of grace, then of their own hearts: otherwiſe is it, in both theſe reſpects, with the *preſumptuous*, who raſhly lay hold of what, in that manner, is not offered to them (for God doth not offer to ſinners ſecurity and joy, before the mind is ſtruck with a proper concern for paſt crimes, and due ſolicitude for ſalvation) and boaſt raſhly of the grace they have apprehended, of which, by no neceſſary arguments, do they know how to prove themſelves partakers.

SECT. XXVIII.

The third difference between the faithful, and the preſumptuous, is in the *joy* they have: for there is a joy which accompanies, and follows both theſe kinds of faith; and this

this difference is two-fold. I. In reſpect of its origin. II. In reſpect of the effect of that joy. In the caſe of preſumptuous faith, a joy ariſes partly from the rarity and novelty of the things revealed (for the knowledge of a truth, which is more rare and abſtruſe than common, delights the underſtanding, as the enjoyment of any good delights the will) partly from that vain imagination, that the good things offered in the goſpel belong to them, of which they have, in ſome ſort a taſte, but, as it were, only with the outſide of the lips; and this from the ordinary and common gifts of the Holy Spirit. But in living faith there ariſes a more noble and more ſolid joy, from the love of thoſe moſt precious truths, by the knowledge of which, the ſoul taught of God, rightly thinks itſelf moſt happy; and this from a hope that is not fallacious, but a certain perſuaſion of the believer's own ſpirit,* together with the teſtimony of the Spirit of God, of preſent grace and future glory; and laſtly, from a moſt ſweet ſenſe of preſent grace, and a real foretaſte of future glory. Since therefore there are ſuch different cauſes of joy, no wonder the effects of that joy are in both caſes different.

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* Rom. viii. 16.

The firſt makes the ſoul *full of itſelf*, leaves it *empty* of the love of God, and ſtill increaſes the ſlumber of carnal ſecurity. Whereas the latter kind of joy ſtrikes, in a wonderful manner, the faithful ſoul with an admiration of the unmerited love of God to man, inflames them with mutual love towards the moſt beneficent Jeſus, and begets in them a ſollicitous exactneſs, leſt they ſhould admit, or allow themſelves in any thing unworthy the immenſe favour they have received from God, or grieve that ſpirit of grace which hath dealt ſo kindly by them.

SECT. XXIX.

The fourth difference reſpects the *fruits* of faith. For preſumptuous faith either drowns men in a deep ſleep of ſecurity, which they increaſe by indulging the fleſh; or it brings a ſort of outward change of action for the better, and ſo orders it, that *by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they*, in a meaſure, *eſcape the pollutions of the world*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. or when it operates in the higheſt manner, it excites ſome light and fading purpoſes, and endeavours after a more accurate kind of piety; but it doth not purify

the very heart, it doth not introduce new habits of holineſs, and as often as the flatteries of the world and the fleſh, or any inconveniencies accompanying evangelical piety, come on a little ſtronger than uſual, they immediately tire in the courſe of goodneſs they had ſet out upon, and then they return *like the ſow that was waſhed, to wallow in the mire.* They are prevailed upon indeed by the ſuperficial knowledge of evangelical truth, and of a good, ſo pleaſant and uſeful, as well as becoming, which is held forth in the goſpel, to amend their lives, tho' theſe things are not deeply impreſſed on their minds; but when it comes in queſtion, how they ſhall get any preſent advantage, or avoid any imminent calamity, the ideas of truth and goodneſs, which the goſpel has ſuggeſted to them, are ſo obliterated and defaced, that they prefer the getting the preſent good or pleaſure, and avoiding the impending evil, to all the promiſes in the goſpel, and to all evangelical piety. But *living faith* impreſſes the image of what is right and good in ſuch deep characters on the ſoul, that it thinks nothing can be more lovely than to endeavour after it with all its power and might: it paints in ſuch

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lively colours the bright holineſs of the Lord Chriſt, that the ſoul fondly contemplating it, is transformed into His image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It repreſents the love of the dying Jeſus ſo feelingly, that the faithful reckons nothing more acceptable, than in return to live and die for Him, Gal. ii. 20. It engraves, as it were, the meditation of promiſed bleſſedneſs ſo deeply, that it is ready to *experience all things*, and *bear all things* for it, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. and thus it purifies the *heart itſelf*, Acts xv. 9. and improves it into a ſincere and conſtant piety, which, as faith is more lively or more languid, is alſo more lively or more languid.

SECT. XXX.

Having thus far obſerved the nature of *living faith*, and its difference from *preſumptuous faith*, let us farther enquire, *how every one may be conſcious to himſelf, that he has faith.* For that it is poſſible, yea, frequent for the faithful to have a conſciouſneſs of their faith, Paul teaches us, not by his own example only, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know in whom I have believed*; but in that admonition directed to all,

2 Cor. xiii. 5. *examine yourſelves, prove your own ſelves, whether ye be in the faith.* Which admonition would be vain, if by examination, and trial they could not arrive at the knowledge of what they ſearch after. But that they could, he plainly enough inſinuates by adding, *know ye not your own ſelves, that Jeſus Chriſt is in you except ye be reprobates?*

SECT. XXXI.

Nor is it difficult to underſtand, how this *conſciouſneſs of faith* ſhould ariſe in the faithful. Firſt, it behoves them to be well informed of the nature of ſaving faith from the word of God. Nor is there any neceſſity to weary the minds of the weak with a multiplicity of marks to judge by; only let it be explained to them ſimply and clearly, what are the principal and eſſential acts of faith: let the difference betwixt a *ſtrong* and a *weak* faith be inculcated, betwixt faith that is *lively* and that which is *languid*; that which is *quiet* and *calm*, and that which is *ſhaken* with various temptations: and let them be admoniſhed, not only that *weak*, *languid*, or *ſhaken* faith, is nevertheleſs *true* faith, but

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that in the examination of themſelves, *weak* faith is not to be meaſured by the idea of *ſtrong* faith; that which is *languid*, by that of *lively* faith; nor faith that is *ſhaken*, by the idea of faith that is *quiet* and *calm*; but each is to be compared with its proper idea. This being duly obſerved, let every one examine himſelf, whether he putteth forth acts agreable to what we have been deſcribing: which no man that attends diligently to himſelf can be ignorant of. Whatſoever things a Man thinks of, and wills, by that very faculty which thinks of and wills thoſe things, is he immediately conſcious that he does ſo: now faith is an action of the mind and will.

SECT. XXXII.

Somebody perhaps may reply——if it be ſo ready and eaſy a matter to be conſcious of one's having faith, whence doth it happen that many of the faithful are tormented with ſuch uneaſy waverings about this matter? There is more than one reaſon for this. I. It often happens that they have either formed to themſelves a *wrong idea* of faith, or have raſhly taken it from others who have incautiouſly form'd

it before them. Thus we have learnt from experience, that not a ſmall number of Souls have been exerciſed in an opinion, that the *eſſence* of faith conſiſts in a *certain perſuaſion* of divine love, in a delightful *ſenſe* of it, and *full aſſurance* of ſalvation, and not finding theſe things in themſelves, have, by a harſh judgment, expunged themſelves from the lot of the faithful. Yet thoſe very people, being better informed of the nature of faith, and being taught, that theſe things are rather the glorious fruits of a *confirm'd* and *ſtrong* faith, than the *eſſential* acts of *true* faith, have, by little and little, returned to a more quiet mind. II. It alſo ſometimes happens, that the faithful are agitated with ſo many ſtorms of temptation, that they attend the leſs to the diſcernment of the proper acts of their ſouls, or indeed are leſs able to attend to them. For in that ſituation, all things are done by them ſo confuſedly, and in ſuch a deſultory manner, that in this perturbation of mind, they cannot diſcern clearly the ſtate of their own hearts, while the thoughts of their own minds and the emotions of their wills, ſucceed and oppoſe each other with an unaccountable variety. III. Sometimes too it is difficult, eſ-

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pecially in an afflicted ſtate of their ſouls, to reconcile that contention of their actions, with the deſcription of true faith, or, to ſpeak more clearly, to weigh or compare the rule, with that, which ought to be exacted by that rule: eſpecially when any one has propoſed to himſelf an idea of *lively* faith, and only diſcovers in himſelf a *languid* faith, then it can hardly be otherwiſe; but, ſeeing very little agreement in theſe things, or rather the wideſt difference between the rule, and the act to be done according to that rule, he muſt think the worſe of his Faith.

SECT. XXXIII.

It is not indeed abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, that every one ſhould * *know that he believes*, for the promiſe is annexed to the ſin-

* Should the Reader be at a loſs here for our author's meaning, let him take a review of the preceding ſection, and he will then find that Witſius is here alluding to thoſe *accidental* hindrances of *the knowledge of our faith* therein mention'd; ſuch as *forming a wrong idea of faith, being ſurrounded with temptation*, &c. which may conceal the *knowledge of our faith* from us, and yet not affect the ſafety of our ſtate. This ſituation and the means of our removal out of it, are beautifully deſcribed, Iſ. l. 10.

ſincerity of faith, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. not to the knowledge that any may have of their faith. Nevertheleſs it is expedient that every one ſhould, by an accurate ſcrutiny, inquire into the truth and ſincerity of his faith. I. That he may render due thanks to God for ſuch an inſtimable gift. For if Paul could ſo often render thanks to God for the faith of others, Eph. i. 15, 16. Phil. i. 3, 4. 1 Theſſ. i. 2, 3. 2 Theſſ. i. 3. how much more is it incumbent upon every one to thank God for his own faith? But he can't do this, unleſs he knows he has faith. II. That he may greatly conſole himſelf: for a conſciouſneſs of our faith, makes us at the ſame time certain of ſalvation: thus the apoſtle joins theſe two, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know in whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him againſt that day.* III. That he may run the race of holineſs with the greater alacrity, for he who is certain that he works from a principle of faith, is certain alſo, that *his labour will not be in vain in the Lord*; and this certainty makes the believer *ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

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FINIS.